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Description of Teacher Inservice Education
Materials.

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ABSTRACT

The described teacher education course is designed for elementary school teachers seeking to develop skills for building decoding ability in their beginning reading students and students who need remedial help. An outline of the scope and sequence of topics is given as well as a description of activities and resources involved in the course. Ordering information for materials is included. A critique of the course is also provided. (JD)

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DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER IN-SERVICE EDUCATION MATERIALS

A. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Title: TEACHING READING AS DECODING (Minicourse 18)

Publication Date(s): 1973

Intended Users: Teachers seeking skills for building decoding ability in reading

Grade Level(s): Elementary (primarily teachers of beginning readers, K-3; also teachers of 4th-6th with reading difficulties)

Number: Maximum 10 (in one school) per microteaching facility

Primary Focus: Skill building in the use of selected teaching strategies for developing fundamental abilities to translate "from written graphic symbols to the appropriate sounds of our speech" is highlighted.

School subject(s) and/or in-service topic(s) covered: This product presents teaching skills for helping students to (1) recognize and differentiate graphemes (letters); (2) establish sound-symbol correspondences for regular and irregular consonant letters and for larger letter units; (3) use context clues in decoding unfamiliar words; and (4) apply these skills in a problem-solving strategy. Relevant research is summarized; skills are explained in a Teachers Handbook, illustrated in six films, and practiced through microteaching.

What participant does in using the materials:

Teachers (1) read about skills in a Teachers Handbook, (2) view films illustrating the skills, (3) plan and conduct microteaching lessons, and (4) self-evaluate their lessons. Microteaching is conducted with 1-5 students outside the regular classroom and is videotaped. This is intended to be self-instructional.

Resources:

No leader is needed; but someone is essential to facilitate operation. Required for the group of ten teachers are: 1 videotape system, 1 small room set aside for microteaching; 16mm film projector. Each teacher needs 20 minutes reel of blank videotape; copy of Teachers Handbook; 14 hours of released time. Teacher time to complete course: 2-4 hours in-school and 2-4 hours out-of-school per week for six or seven weeks. A Coordinators Handbook is supplied.

Describer critique:

This is not a comprehensive approach to teaching beginning reading. It emphasizes selected skills reflecting a linguistic approach to decoding (word recognition). Course demands substantial time investment by teachers and coordinator. Its self-instructional/self-evaluative character may make it particularly attractive to many.

decoding-phonics

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SP 013 907

B. IN-DEPTH INFORMATION

Title:	TEACHING READING AS DECODING (Minicourse 18)
Publication Date(s):	1973
Intended Users:	Teachers seeking skills for building decoding ability in reading
Grade Level(s):	Elementary (primarily teachers of beginning readers K-3; also teachers of 4th-6th with reading difficulties)
Number:	Maximum 10 (in one school) per microteaching facility
Primary Focus:	Skill building in the use of selected teaching strategies for developing fundamental abilities to translate "from written graphic symbols to the appropriate sounds of our speech " is highlighted.

1.0 PURPOSES:

The Coordinators Handbook provides the following rationale: "The reading process has two major components: (1) the decoding (pronunciation) of written symbols; and (2) the attachment of meaning to the written forms of language. Minicourse 18 deals with the decoding portion of this process. The importance of decoding is substantiated by a large body of research consulted in the development of Minicourse 18. Studies indicate that an initial emphasis on decoding skills leads to better word recognition and ultimately to greater comprehension than do other approaches to beginning reading. The ability to decode precedes skill in comprehension; the reader must be able to translate written language into the spoken forms of language that he already knows (be able to decode) before he can attach meaning to what he reads."

The broad objective is "to develop skill in the use of teaching processes proved effective for building pupils' decoding skills."

Teacher objectives for the five instructional sequences are:

- "1. To develop teaching behaviors that build pupil skill in recognizing and discriminating graphemes.
- "2. To develop teacher skills related to helping pupils establish grapheme-phoneme correspondences.
- "3. To develop teacher skill in helping pupils associate and discriminate grapheme-phoneme correspondences based upon larger letter units.
- "4. To develop teacher skill in helping pupils use context clues to decode unfamiliar words.
- "5. To develop skill in integrating and applying skills for teaching decoding presented in Sequences I, II, III, and IV in a problem-solving strategy."

Also stated are parallel pupil objectives -- the skills pupils would be expected to acquire as a result of teacher use of the instructional skills.

2.0 CONTENT — Scope and Sequencing of Topics:

Each of five instructional sequences deals with two or three specific teaching skills:

Sequence I: Build pupil skill in (1) matching like graphemes, (2) discriminating unlike graphemes, (3) locating graphemes in words.

Sequence II: Establish grapheme-phoneme correspondences for (1) regular consonant letters and (2) irregular consonant letters.

Sequence III: Establish grapheme-phoneme correspondences for (1) larger letter units using similar spelling patterns, (2) larger letter units using predictable contrasting spelling patterns, and (3) morphemes.

Sequence IV: Help pupils to (1) decode words by their relationship to other words in a sentence and (2) use context clues to decode homographs.

Sequence V: (1) Introduce and explain the problem-solving strategy (explained in the course); (2) provide practice in applying the strategy to decoding unfamiliar words; and (3) guide pupils to independence in applying the strategy to decoding unfamiliar words.

The Teachers Handbook contains seven types of material for each instructional sequence: (1) an 8-12 page narrative discussion of the skills presented in that sequence, including a rationale, summary of relevant research, and examples of skill application; (2) a written self-test with answers; (3) instructions and planning form(s) for one or more microteach lesson(s); (4) a form for self-evaluating each videotaped microteach lesson; (5) criteria for deciding whether to repractice the skills in the sequence during a "Teaching to Criterion" lesson; (6) a self-evaluation form for this lesson; and (7) a "planning supplement," containing suggested lists of letters, words, sentences, etc., for use with pupils during microteaching.

Also provided in the Teachers Handbook are a brief glossary of terms, a checklist of course activities, a bibliography, and one pretest for each instructional sequence -- to be used in selecting pupils for the microteach lessons.

Six films accompany the course. One is introductory; the other five restate the skills discussed in the Teachers Handbook and illustrate their application through classroom footage of small group reading instruction.

The course materials are intended to be used in the established sequence and in their entirety. The Coordinators Handbook states: "Please remember as you plan that Minicourses are designed to provide a complete in-service training experience. Our research indicates that Minicourse 18 is effective when all the course materials are used, following the recommended procedures. We have no evidence that components of the course are effective when used separately. For example, occasionally a teacher will feel that he can acquire the course skills just by viewing the films. We have no evidence that would substantiate this claim. Therefore, you should be sure that teachers study all of the materials and do the microteaching in order to obtain the full benefit of Minicourse 18."

3.0 ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES INVOLVED IN USE OF PRODUCT

3.1 Description of main in-service activities: Course activities for each sequence follow a pattern of reading about a set of skills in the Teachers Handbook, viewing a related film, planning and conducting one or more videotaped microteach lesson in which the skills are applied, self-evaluating the videotaped lesson, and planning, conducting, and evaluating a "teaching to criterion" lesson in which the skills are practiced a second time. While the latter lessons are at the teacher's option, the producer strongly recommends they not be omitted. In addition, nine microteach lessons are scheduled; all fourteen microteaches are to be taught on released time with pupils from the regular classroom. Teachers who do not have students with whom it would be appropriate to practice one or more of the sets of skills borrow students from other classes.

Except for group viewing of films, participants complete all activities individually and independently.

3.2 Help given in use of product:

The Teachers Handbook provides a sequential list of activities to be completed and gives detailed instructions for planning lessons and self-evaluating skill acquisition. The Coordinators Handbook contains very detailed instructions to assist with course operation — e.g., agendas for conducting introductory meetings, procedures for training teachers in use of the videotape recorder, sample schedules for the course and for microteaching.

4.0 EVALUATION OF TEACHER INSERVICE LEARNING

Evaluation is built into each instructional sequence and is conducted individually and privately. The "Learning Checkpoint" at the end of each chapter in the Teachers Handbook give participants information about their ability to apply the skills in written practice. Following microteaching, teachers replay the videotapes of their lessons and complete "Self-evaluation" forms that direct attention to their use of the skills. The producers emphasize that the videotapes and self-evaluation forms are for individual guidance in assessing progress and planning subsequent lessons. They recommend that teachers be free to erase their videotapes and that no coordinator, supervisor, etc., have access to self-evaluative data.



5.0 ORDERING INFORMATION

5.1 Resources required/recommended:

This is used with a videotape recording system -- one in each school with participants and for a maximum of ten teachers. Also required are a room at least 12' x 14' set aside in each school for microteaching, a 16mm film projector, a 20 minute reel of blank videotape for each participant, and 14 hours of released time for each participating teacher (9 hours of regular microteaching and 5 hours of "teaching to criterion" microteaching which is optional but strongly recommended). A coordinator (to arrange schedules, troubleshoot, etc.) is an absolute essential. Time to complete course: 2-4 hours in-school and 2-4 hours out-of-school per week for six or seven weeks.

An audiotape recorder may be substituted for the VTR. Producers state they have found audiotape and videotape feedback of about equal effectiveness.

5.2 Distributor name/address:

MacMillan Educational Services, Inc.
866 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10022
Phone: (212) 935-2000

5.3 Components/approximate costs:

Component	Purchase	Rental	No. Req.	Reusable
Teachers Handbook 199 pages	\$1200.00	\$210.00	1/participant	No*
Coordinators Handbook 51 pages	4.50		1/site	Yes
Six 16mm Color Films	4.50		1/site	Yes

*Teachers Handbook is reusable with the exception of the learning checkpoints, lesson plan forms, and self-evaluation forms. If these materials were re-produced, the Handbook could be used repeatedly.

6.0 HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Identification of the developer: This course on reading as decoding was written by Beatrice A. Ward and Dawn B. Skailand, Teacher Education Division of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco. The Division was directed at the time by Ned A. Flanders. The Minicourse teacher training format was developed at the Laboratory under the leadership of Walter R. Borg, original director of the Teacher Education Division, and was adapted from the microteach approach developed at Stanford University.

6.2 How developed and when:

The developer states: "Minicourse 18 has undergone an extensive testing cycle. Over 200 inservice and pre-service teachers have taken the course. The main field test involved 56 teachers from the school districts of Chicago, Illinois; Montgomery County, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; and San Lorenzo, California. The purpose of this test was to discover whether teachers improved their skills in teaching reading as decoding as a result of taking Minicourse 18."

6.3 Evidence of effectiveness with users:

The Teachers Handbook provides only a general summary statement of effectiveness: "The results [of the field test] indicate that the course significantly changed teaching behavior in terms of both increased use of desirable skills and decreased use of undesirable or negative teaching behaviors." A number of teachers have reported especially gratifying results when they applied the teaching skills in Minicourse 18 to working with children who were "disabled readers."

Research reports on minicourses are available from the Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, California 94103.

C. DESCRIBER CRITIQUE

Appropriateness / adaptability / technical quality:

Potential users should recognize four major constraints. (1) The course is not intended to provide comprehensive training in teaching beginning reading; it emphasizes selected strategies for developing decoding skills. (2) A maximum of ten participants in one school can be accommodated per microteach facility (VTR and microteach room); if audiotape were used, the number could be expanded. (3) Intended as a "self-contained training package," the course is designed for use with minimum modification. (4) Extensive, skilled coordination appears to be vital to avoid operational problems that would reduce course effectiveness. Given the course's purpose and format, none of these constraints is inappropriate, though they should be recognized.

All components are of professional technical quality.

Content accuracy/social fairness/community acceptance issues:

No disturbing biases are evident, though users should be aware that the course does reflect linguistic methodology. For example, teachers are instructed not to utter speech sounds in isolation (too - tuh, no); not to say that a letter "makes a sound" (instead, that a letter stands for or represents a sound); etc.

These admonitions are supported by references to research summarized in the Teachers Handbook, but, nevertheless, do represent an approach to reading instruction with which some teachers and reading authorities disagree.

Overall summary/comment:

Major strengths of this course are its format as a highly transportable, self-administered, self-contained training package and its thorough provisions for skill practice in addition to skill knowledge. The constraints noted above may or may not be weaknesses, depending on local resources and intents.